

CHAPTER XXXI.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV.

Various Administrative Improvements—1913—1918.

Although the period from 1914 to 1918 was a period of great excitement and anxiety on account of the great European War, there was no lack of continuity in the introduction of various internal improvements to enhance the prosperity of the country. Sir M. Visvesvaraya was a financier of advanced views and he was in favour of incurring larger expenditure for the material and moral advancement of the country. He was also not a timid financier inasmuch as he held the view that public borrowing for productive purposes which had an unsavoury odour to some was quite justified when it brought additional revenue to the State and gave occupation and food to the people.

In November 1912 when Sir M. Visvesvaraya became Dewan, the assets of the State amounted to Rs. 795 lakhs and the liabilities to Rs. 362 lakhs. During the six years he was in charge of the administration, the revenues of the State ranged between Rs. 255 and Rs. 315 lakhs. The expenditure increased progressively from Rs. 202 lakhs in 1912-13 to Rs. 298 lakhs in 1918-19, but in spite of this increase in expenditure, large annual surpluses were left.

Railway Construction.

The construction of fresh lines of railway which had been suspended for some time was resumed. The work on the Mysore-Arsikere railway line *via* Hassan was commenced in November 1913 and completed and opened for traffic in 1918. This line was 103 miles in length and crossed three rivers the Lakshmanatirtha, the Kaveri and the Hemavathi. In 1913 the Government at the request of the Chikballapur Light Railway Company took over the construction of this line to its hands and the section between Yelahanka and Devanhalli was opened for goods traffic in the following year. Similarly the Kolar District Board metre gauge line from Bowringpet to Chikballapur *via* Kolar, Srinivasapur and Chintamani was also completed and

opened for traffic. On the 17th December 1913 His Highness the Maharaja opened the completed line from Bowringpet to Kolar and in his speech on that occasion said: "I am particularly glad to perform the opening ceremony, because I wish to show my appreciation of the public spirit which has prompted the people of the Kolar District to construct this much needed line among themselves. As the pioneers of Local Fund Railways in Mysore, you deserve the warm support of my Government and I earnestly hope that when you have shown the way, other districts will not be slow to follow."

A tramway was also undertaken for construction between Tarikere and Narasimharajapur and completed as far as Luckwalli at this time. In 1915-16 a Railway Committee was constituted consisting of official and non-official members to advise the Government on questions relating to railway policy, finance, construction and establishment. In fulfilment of the conditions of the branch lines agreement, the Government of India agreed in 1918 to restore to the State the management of the Bangalore-Mysore, Mysore-Nanjangud and Birur-Shimoga sections from the hands of the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Company. With the resumption of these lines, a total length of 372 miles of metre and narrow gauge lines came under the management of the State.

For the satisfactory development, however, of the trade and commerce of the State, it was understood that two main arterial connections were of vital importance. The metre gauge system terminated at Nanjangud and unless it was continued and connected with the same system in South India, the Mysore railway system would remain incomplete. This question which was of 30 years standing at the time was again brought under correspondence with the Government of India. Similarly a railway line was needed to connect the State railway system with a suitable port on the West Coast. A project for a line from Arsikere to Mangalore *via* Hassan was for a long time under the consideration of His Highness' Government. But later it was abandoned as the port of Mangalore was not open to shipping for

at least 3 months in the year. It was now considered preferable to have a port at Bhatkal and investigations for the purpose were started. The sea-board near Bhatkal was only 10 miles from the State frontier. There was a project to construct a new railway from Shimoga to the top of the Western Ghats for opening up the forests and the Malnad area and the distance of Bhatkal from the terminus of the new railway was less than fifty miles. The length of additional railway needed to join the sea-board at this point was much shorter and the descent from the top of the Ghats to the coast much easier than it was from any other point. Bhatkal however was entirely in British territory and the execution of the project depended entirely on the sympathy and support of the Government of India.

Development of Electric Power.

The electric scheme obtained considerable development from time to time ever since it was started. By 1912 a sum of over Rs. 83 lakhs had been spent as capital outlay and the net profit in that year amounted to 8.51 per cent on the total capital invested, after deducting interest charge at 4 per cent. Both the city of Mysore and the Civil and Military Station of Bangalore were for the first time illuminated with electric lighting in the year 1908. Subsequently arrangements were also made for supplying electric power at cheap rates for small household appliances and industrial concerns.

In 1913 an agreement was concluded with the Gold Mining Companies to afford protection to the existing power supply by storage in the Kannambadi reservoir and also to provide them with an additional supply of power. The dam of the Kannambadi reservoir begun in 1911 had risen by this time to a height of 51.50 feet in the river bed. The storage of water thus far secured not only enabled the Government to guarantee to the Gold Mines power supply up to 9321 H.P. as previously agreed to, but also to supply additional power to the extent of 5000 H.P. Regarding the second stage of the reservoir, as there were differences of opinion between the Madras Government and the Mysore Durbar, the Government of India appointed a Court of Arbitration presided

over by Sir Henry Griffin, Judge of the High Court of Allahabad, assisted by the Hon'ble Mr. Nethersole, Inspector-General of Irrigation in India, as assessor. The proceedings of the court commenced on the 18th July 1913 and after conducting investigations for nearly ten months, the Court submitted its award to the Government of India in 1914. In March 1916 that Government confirmed the award of the Arbitration Court, thereby enabling the Durbar to undertake the construction of the second stage of the reservoir project which when completed was expected to bring under irrigation an additional extent of land of over 1,25,000 acres in the Mandya, Malavalli, Nagamangala and T-Narsipur taluks. Among the inhabitants of the Kaveri delta, particularly those of Tanjore and Trichnopoly districts, there was however considerable misconception regarding the effect of this award. The area in the Mysore territory irrigated at this time by the Kaveri was 1,15,000 acres, while the corresponding area in the lower reaches of the river within the Madras Presidency was 12,25,000 acres; that is to say, 92 per cent of the area irrigated by this river lay in the Madras Presidency and only 8 per cent in Mysore. Three-fourths of the water-supply of the river however passed through Mysore territory and thus the benefit derived by the State was wholly incommensurate with the high proportion of the total flow contributed by Mysore. A large surplus flow in the river went to waste into the sea year after year after meeting the needs of both the Mysore and Madras irrigation and the Mysore project was intended to intercept only a small portion of this surplus. The award contained a proviso placing the Mysore Government under an obligation to deliver a constant supply of 900 cubic feet of water per second regularly in the hot weather, while the natural river flow was on occasions as low as one-tenth of that discharge, compelling Mysore thus to pay a heavy price for the award in her favour.

Fresh attempts for efficient maintenance of tanks.

During this period fresh attempts were made to devise more efficient methods for the proper maintenance of tanks. As the efforts hitherto made had not yielded the expected results, a committee was now appointed for the investigation and suggestion

of more efficient means than those hitherto adopted. This committee submitted its report in August 1918. The report stated that there were many tanks in the State with atchkats (maximum cultivable area) disproportionate to their capacities due to a variety of causes such as the accumulation of silt in the tank thereby diminishing the storage of water, the indiscriminate grant of fresh lands on Nirsardi or water-rate without reference to the capacity of the tank, there being no co-ordination between the three departments concerned in the matter—the Public Works who were responsible for the storage of water, the Revenue Department whose duty it was to grant facilities for extension of cultivation and the Settlement Department whose duty consisted in fixing assessments on lands more or less as they found them at the time of their operations. Further, the mode of choosing major tanks for restoration was left to chance without a properly pre-arranged programme. It was also found that there were still 737 major tanks waiting for restoration out of a total number of 2507 in the State. The rule enjoining the pre-payment of one-third of the estimated amount either in money or in labour proved irksome to the land-holders and was often evaded. In addition to the major tanks which had not been touched, there were also 18,490 minor tanks still to be restored. At the rate at which restoration in the past had been carried out, the committee calculated that it would take 140 years to complete the whole. Further, simultaneously with the efficient restoration of tanks, there was also needed an arrangement for their periodical repair and proper maintenance. Various other methods such as the commutation of the ryot's liability by the imposition of an acreage cess, attempts to revive the communal spirit by the formation of village statutory bodies under the Tank Panchayet Regulation had also failed to fulfil the expectations formed of them. The question of efficiently maintaining the tanks was however of paramount importance to an agricultural country like Mysore, and at all times it has caused anxiety to Government to find an effective solution in a matter where old established traditions were light-heartedly interfered with in the past.

The Introduction of the Jury System.

Frequent representations having been made at the meetings of the Representative Assembly for the introduction of the jury system in the trial of sessions cases, the Government sanctioned for the first time its introduction in the Bangalore and Mysore districts from July 1917 and the system was extended in later years to other districts.

Separation of Magisterial from Executive functions.

In 1916 one hundred and twenty-eight Village Munsiffs' Courts commenced to work. In the same year sanction was accorded to the formation of courts of Benches of Honorary Magistrates at four of the district headquarter towns and these courts were made permanent in May 1918, the scheme being subsequently extended to the remaining four districts also.

In 1907 as an experimental measure, the Amildars of seven taluks in different parts of the State had been relieved of their magisterial functions and the same assigned either to City Magistrates or to Munsiffs. Later, the Government became convinced that it would tend on the whole to a better and prompter administration of justice, if the duty of trying cases was assigned as far as possible, to officers whose attention was not distracted by other important and heavy work, and accordingly in May 1918 a scheme was introduced for providing a separate agency for the disposal of original criminal work. According to this scheme, three grades of special magistrates came into existence—those of the first grade being first class magistrates with, as a rule, appellate powers, those of the second grade generally exercised second class powers, and the third grade magistrates generally exercised second class powers. Assistant Commissioners, Amildars and Deputy Amildars continued to be magistrates ex-officio, but they ceased to exercise magisterial functions in practice, except such as were really executive in their nature under the Criminal Procedure Code. The scheme was in the first instance introduced in the districts of Bangalore and Shimoga where it came into operation from 1st July 1919 and was completed in the whole State by 1925.

In 1906 the Mysore Municipal Regulation VII of that year had been passed into law and the Municipal Councils of the cities of Bangalore and Mysore had been brought under its operation. A change in the appointment of Presidents of Municipal Councils was made in 1913 allowing the choice to be made from among non-officials also. The Bangalore City Municipality was the first to be selected for this change and Sir K. P. Puttanna Chetty who had retired as a Member of the State Council readily came forward to fill this place. In the Municipalities of Kolar, Tumkur and Chickmagalur non-officials were appointed as Vice-Presidents.

Reform of the Legislative Council.

After an experience of the working of the Legislative Council for about 8 years, it was found that improvements in certain directions were needed and these were effected by Regulation I of 1914. The Legislative Council formed in 1907 had been based on the model of the British Indian Act of 1861. But though this act had been revised more than once, the Mysore Council continued on its old lines. In order to improve the representative character of the Council, the number of members was raised to 24 from the old maximum number which varied from 15 to 18. Of the increased number, 4 were nominated on the recommendation of the Representative Assembly, 4 by territorial representation from the districts. Ten were officials and six were nominated by Government. The number of elected members by these changes was raised from 2 to 8. The privileges of discussing the annual State Budget and of raising interpellations were given. The Council, however, had no power to modify or to add to the budget or to move resolutions on the same. The interpellations were limited to 12 questions at each session and the nature of the questions to be admitted was determined, among other considerations, on the measure of support accorded to the questions by the members. These changes however did not modify the ultimate character of the Mysore State constitution and the responsibility for the good government of the country rested entirely with the Maharaja as settled by the Government of India. In reforming the Legislative Council His Highness was actuated by a keen desire to associate the

On account of the world war which prevailed at this time, the political and other conditions had become very unstable and it was therefore considered that the finances of the State should undergo further scrutiny by an expert. Mr. K. L. Datta, a retired officer of the Finance Department of the Government of India, was temporarily appointed to make an independent examination of the accounts and finances of the State, no such examination having

extent permitted by civilised medical etiquette.

introduced, the doctors had been given the necessary access to the purdah or a hand thrust through a door chink, but under the change the disease by examining the tongue shown through a slit in the Till a couple of years ago, he said, the doctors could only diagnose whenever they wanted to understand the condition of the patient. out the difficulties under which the doctors formerly laboured into existence to an ailing Purnadashin Sultana and he pointed likened the Mysore finances before this reformed committee came at the Budget Session of the Legislative Council humoursly appointed to the new post of Financial Secretary, speaking department. In this year J. S. Chakravarthi who had been carefully acquaint themselves with the allotments made for each Assembly was held, so that the members might have ample time to ordered to be published before the session of the Representative Secretary was also appointed in 1916. The draft budget was also with finance and the development of revenue, a full time Financial attention might be given to the more important questions connected as scope for retrenching expenditure. In order that greater view to enable it to investigate means of expanding revenue as well was re-constituted and the scope of its work was enlarged with a meeting held in July 1914. Subsequently the Finance Committee availed of by the Members of the Legislative Council at their the State accorded by the Maharaja was for the first time The privilege of discussing the annual financial budget of

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representatives of his subjects in the councils of the administration, so that they might bring to bear their influence on the policy and activities of Government.

taken place after that of Mr. Kiernander in 1902. Mr. Datta on reviewing the State's finances as they stood on the 30th July 1916 found that the State had succeeded in creating assets equal to its gross income for nearly two years after making provision for the two loans which it had raised and was of opinion that the administration might be justly proud of the results achieved. A new classification of the budget heads was introduced by Mr. Datta and the budget also came to include for the first time the detailed estimates of the Public Works Department.